

REVOKED

Statement of Principles

concerning

CONJUNCTIVITIS

ICD CODE: 077, 372.0, 372.1, 372.3

Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986
subsection 196B(2)

1. Being of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that **conjunctivitis** and **death from conjunctivitis** can be related to operational service rendered by veterans, peacekeeping service rendered by members of Peacekeeping forces and hazardous service rendered by members of the Forces, the Repatriation Medical Authority determines, under subsection 196B(2) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the Act), that the factors that must as a minimum exist before it can be said that a reasonable hypothesis has been raised connecting **conjunctivitis** or **death from conjunctivitis** with the circumstances of that service, are:
 - (a) suffering a bacterial infection of the affected eye during the clinical onset of bacterial conjunctivitis; or
 - (b) suffering a chlamydial infection of the affected eye during the clinical onset of chlamydial conjunctivitis; or
 - (c) suffering a viral infection of the affected eye during the clinical onset of conjunctivitis; or
 - (d) suffering a systemic viral disease during the clinical onset of conjunctivitis; or

- (e) suffering a Rickettsial infection during the clinical onset of conjunctivitis; or
- (f) suffering a fungal infection of the affected eye during the clinical onset of fungal conjunctivitis; or
- (g) suffering a parasitic infection of the affected eye during the clinical onset of parasitic conjunctivitis; or
- (h) suffering a hypersensitivity reaction during the clinical onset of immunologic conjunctivitis; or
- (j) suffering from an autoimmune disease involving the affected eye immediately before the clinical onset of immunologic conjunctivitis; or
- (k) having received long term therapy to the affected eye with topically applied drugs or solutions immediately before the clinical onset of iatrogenic conjunctivitis; or
- (m) suffering a burn of the affected eye due to acid, alkalis, or other chemical agent immediately before the clinical onset of irritant conjunctivitis; or
- (n) suffering exposure of the affected eye to dense smoke or smog immediately before the clinical onset of irritant conjunctivitis; or
- (o) suffering from mustard gas exposure to the affected eye immediately before the clinical onset of irritant conjunctivitis; or
- (p) suffering from radiation exposure causing thermal burns to the affected eye immediately before the clinical onset of irritant conjunctivitis; or
- (q) suffering from psoriasis during the clinical onset of conjunctivitis; or
- (r) suffering from dermatitis herpetiformis during the clinical onset of conjunctivitis; or
- (s) suffering from severe and prolonged malnutrition before the clinical onset of conjunctivitis; or
- (t) suffering from a benign or malignant neoplasm of the conjunctiva or lid margin before the clinical onset of conjunctivitis; or

- (u) being in an immuno-compromised state before the clinical worsening of conjunctivitis; or
 - (v) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for the conjunctivitis.
2. Subject to clause 3 (below) at least one of the factors set out in paragraphs **1(a) to 1(v)** must be related to any service rendered by a person.
 3. The factors set out in paragraphs **1(u) and 1 (v)** apply only where:
 - (a) the person's **conjunctivitis** was contracted before a period, or part of a period, of service to which the factor is related; and
 - (b) the relationship suggested between the **conjunctivitis** and the particular service of a person is a relationship set out in paragraph 8(1)(e), 9(1)(e), 70(5)(d), or 70(5A)(d) of the Act.
 4. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles:

“autoimmune disease” means a disorder caused by an immune response directed against self antigens. An associated immunologic conjunctivitis is a recognised clinical feature of Sjogren's syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, cicatricial pemphigoid, Midline lethal granuloma and Wegener's granulomatosis;

“bacterial conjunctivitis” means inflammation of the conjunctiva secondary to a bacterial infection of the affected eye. The main causative agents for bacterial conjunctivitis are *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Moraxella lacunata*, *Haemophilus aegyptus*, *Pseudomonas*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Acinetobacter lwoffii*, *Haemophilus influenzae*. Rare causes of bacterial conjunctivitis are *Branhamella (Neisseria) catarrhalis*, *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, *Treponema pallidum*, Coliforms and *Proteus*;

“chlamydial conjunctivitis” means inflammation of the conjunctiva secondary to an infection of the affected eye by an obligate intracellular parasite of the genus Chlamydia. The responsible agents are *Chlamydia trachomatis* (Trachoma), *Chlamydia oculogenitalis* (inclusion conjunctivitis), *Chlamydia lymphogranulomatis* (Lymphogranuloma venereum), or *Chlamydia psittaci* (Psittacosis);

“conjunctivitis” means an inflammation of the conjunctiva (the membrane lining the eyelids and exposed surface of the sclera) consisting of conjunctival hyperaemia associated with a discharge and attracting ICD code

077, 372.0, 372.1 or 372.3. Where the eyelids are involved it is known as blepharoconjunctivitis, and where the cornea is involved, as keratoconjunctivitis;

“fungal conjunctivitis” means an inflammation of the conjunctiva secondary to infection of the affected eye by one of the following fungi: *Rhinosporidium seeberi*, *Coccidioides immitis*, *Sporothrix schenkii*, and *Aspergillus*, Dermatophytes (*Microsporum*, *Epidermophyton*, *Trichophyton*). For factors 1(u) and 1(v) it can also include *Candida*;

“hypersensitivity reaction” means a state of altered reactivity in which the body reacts with an exaggerated immune response to a foreign substance. The reaction can either be immediate or delayed and can include allergic reactions to pollens, grasses and animal dander, or atopic dermatitis. It can also mean a reaction to having a plastic artificial eye or the wearing of contact lenses;

“iatrogenic conjunctivitis” means irritation of the conjunctiva due to the long term therapeutic administration of topically applied drugs or solutions to the affected eye, including miotics, neomycin, idoxuridine, contact lens solutions;

“ICD code” means a number assigned to a particular kind of injury or disease in the tenth edition of the International Classification of Diseases 9th Revision, effective date of 1 October 1993, copyrighted by the US Commission on Professional and Hospital Activities, and having the Library of Congress number 77-94472;

“immuno-compromised state” means a state where the immune response has been attenuated by administration of immunosuppressive drugs, or by irradiation, certain types of infection, malnutrition, or a malignant disease process;

“immunologic conjunctivitis” means inflammation of the conjunctiva due to an immediate or delayed hypersensitivity reaction, or due to autoimmune disease. It is also known as allergic conjunctivitis. Immunologic conjunctivitis can be due either to an immediate hypersensitivity reaction causing hay fever conjunctivitis, vernal keratoconjunctivitis, atopic keratoconjunctivitis and giant papillary conjunctivitis; or delayed hypersensitivity reaction causing phlyctenulosis (phlyctenular keratoconjunctivitis) or conjunctivitis secondary to contact blepharitis;

“parasitic conjunctivitis” means an inflammation of the conjunctiva secondary to infestation of the affected eye by the following parasitic organisms including: *Pediculus pubis*, *Onchocerca volvulus*, *Thelazia*

californiensis, Loa Loa, Ascaris lumbricoides, Trichinella spiralis, Schistosoma haematobium, and Taenia solium;

“Rickettsial infection” means an inflammation of the conjunctiva secondary to infection of the affected eye by micro-organisms of the family *Rickettsiaceae*, including by *Rickettsia prowazekii* (epidemic typhus), *R. typhi* (endemic typhus), *R. tsutsugamushi* (scrub typhus), *R. rickettsii* (Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever), *R. conorii* (Mediterranean Fever), and *R. (Coxiella) burnetii* (Q Fever);

“viral infection” means an inflammation of the conjunctiva secondary to a primary viral infection of the affected eye, or secondary to a systemic viral disease. The main viral agents include *Adenovirus types 3, 4, or 7* (pharyngoconjunctival fever); *Enterovirus types 8 and 19* (epidemic keratoconjunctivitis), *Herpes Simplex Virus, Enterovirus type 70* or *Coxsackie virus type A28* (acute haemorrhagic conjunctivitis), pox virus (molluscum contagiosum), *Varicella Zoster* (blepharoconjunctivitis), measles virus (keratoconjunctivitis). Rare causes include Newcastle disease, Epstein-Barr virus, papilloma virus, dengue fever, vaccinia virus.

Dated this **Thirteenth** day of **April**
1995

The Common Seal of the)
Repatriation Medical Authority)
was affixed to this instrument)
in the presence of:)

KEN DONALD
CHAIRMAN